

BOUCHER APPLAUDS FCC'S BROADBAND PLAN

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(Washington, D.C.) - U. S. Representative Rick Boucher, Chairman of the House Subcommittee on Communications, Technology, and the Internet, today applauded the National Broadband Plan which has been developed by the Federal Communications Commission.

“The Commission has done a superb job in meeting the challenge set forth by the Congress one year ago that a national plan to achieve universal broadband access be developed,” Boucher said. **“I look forward to working with FCC Chairman Genachowski to enact legislation which will carry forward the Commission’s plan,”** he added.

Specifically, Boucher identified four areas in which the Commission’s plan addresses key priorities:

1. The recommendation to transition the Federal Universal Service Fund to support broadband is consistent, according to Boucher, with his currently pending proposal to reform the Universal Service Fund. **“Both the Commission’s plan and our comprehensive reform legislation would ensure the Universal Service Fund supports broadband**

deployment. In fact, under current law, Universal Service Fund monies cannot be spent for anything other than basic telephone services. □ It is essential that the funds be expended in a manner that helps achieve nationwide broadband deployment, and I look forward to working with the FCC to pass the comprehensive reform legislation that achieves that goal,”
Boucher said.

2. Boucher praised the Commission for setting a goal consistent with Boucher’s earlier recommendation of achieving high-speed Internet access of 100 megabits per second during the coming decade. He noted that the current average broadband speed of between three and five megabits per second is not sufficient to accommodate advanced applications such as full-motion, high-definition video.

3. Boucher endorsed the Commission’s approach of working with television broadcasters to identify spectrum that could be reallocated for wireless commercial purposes with the consent of broadcasters, who would be compensated when they surrender spectrum for that purpose.

4. According to Boucher, the Commission has made an essential recommendation to auction the D block of the 700 megahertz spectrum and potentially apply the proceeds to financing the build-out of communications capabilities for public safety, including fire, police and rescue departments nationwide. According to Boucher, it is also appropriate for Congress to appropriate public funds to supplement the D block auction proceeds for the build-out of that network and so that first responders can afford the equipment that will assure nationwide, fully-interoperable communications capabilities.

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